

ELFIN

OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

NEWSLETTER



NUMBER 138 - September 2015



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ELF – IN



❖ Small, slight, and delicately - made or proportioned, quick, agile and delicate (as in movement or thought), having an otherworldly, unearthly or magical quality.

- Webster's Dictionary.



ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

EDITORIAL:

A significant landmark has been reached in the history of the EODC. It is 35 years since the first newsletter appeared (August 1980) and was circulated to our 28 inaugural members.

One hundred and thirty seven issues later our quarterly newsletter is received by hundreds of members and Elfin enthusiasts throughout Australia and overseas, and, (thanks to Cheryl) is a much more professional publication.

The idea of forming an Elfin club dates back even further. In early 1978 I wrote to **GARRIE COOPER** asking if he would agree to the idea and if he would become club patron. After a lengthy delay, Garrie responded, and with his approval the club was formed. The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport also supported the move, and even provided a list of Elfin owners with cars registered for Historic racing.

Several of the original 28 members are no longer with us, but it is pleasing to see quite a few names still active and on our current membership list.

A substantial part of the current newsletter is devoted to contributions from the author of the Elfin book, **BARRY CATFORD**. Barry has been researching the early history of the Cooper Austin, one of Garrie's first cars, and has provided an update on the rare Clisby-engined Elfin, a massive project currently being undertaken by James Calder. There is also a piece on the troublesome gear linkage mechanism that bedevils many a racer of rear engine cars – just ask **BILL HEMMING**!

And speaking of Bill, included is the first instalment of his recent trip to America with his Elfin F5000. It's a good read, too!

Sadly we record the passing of a well known motor racing identity and club member **KERRY LUCKINS**. A tribute to Kerry follows.

On a happier note, we welcome back to the EODC quite a number of members who have been 'missing in action' for a while. Rather than remove them from our mailing list, a letter was sent inviting them to rejoin. Several apologized and made up by sending in substantial donations as back pay – (or 'Timmisms' as they are known these days). The extra funds are useful, of course, but more importantly we have you back amongst our ranks. Welcome home!

Brique

EODC DIRECT CREDIT DETAILS

Bank Account No. 5003785

BSB 633-000

Bendigo & Adelaide Bank

Make sure your **NAME** appears on the transaction so your payment can be identified.

CLUB MERCHANDISE:

The latest EODC polo shirts (all sizes) and Elfin caps are now available

Shirts are \$35, caps \$20, or \$50 the pair. (Add \$10 for postage and packaging).

Also Elfin lapel badges (\$8), cloth badges (\$8), key rings (\$12), decals (\$2).

Please send your orders to Cheryl (0419 581 815), reidywithchampers@yahoo.com.au



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BITS 'N' PIECES:

ERRATUM...

BRIAN BOWE has pointed out what he described as "a small correction" to an error we published previously in relation to the Elfin 600 of **GRANT BINGLEY**. Brian adds "I purchased the car in Formula Ford trim from Chester Kerno Uie and converted it to Formula 2 trim for John's brother Terry. I had already promoted John from his 600 (ex-Allison Toy World) to Elfin Formula 3 (ex-Ken Amos of S.A.) It was never John's car".

Our apologies, Brian, and thanks for clearing up this detail.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT from **BARRY CATFORD**

In the seventies **GARRIE** purchased two 1/12 scale Tamiya F1 kits, a McLaren Marlborough Texaco M23 and a Ferrari 312B (Andretti car). He never did construct either of these models but we can be sure that he knew that Tamiya kits were renowned for their authentic detail and

inspected every piece. As this occurred around the creation of the Elfin MR6 maybe some ideas were incorporated in that car and those following. It is difficult to imagine an F1 Elfin was in his mind, but we will never know.

GARRIE's son Steve now has both model and has only built one at this stage, the Ferrari.



THE CLISBY ELFIN MONO - (more FOOD FOR THOUGHT from **BARRY CATFORD**)

We (my daughter and I) had completed our tour of the Elfin Heritage Centre at the 2015 Elfin BBQ when we encountered at the top of the stairs of the mezzanine floor two members, both with "James" name tags. **JAMES LAMBERT** I recognised and, because of the thoughtful **CHERYL REID**, identified the other as being **JAMES CALDER** and immediately I was reminded of the Clisby Elfin Mono that he had bought from **PETER BAIL**. Having introduced Samantha, the discussion immediately turned to the Mono and more particularly the all alloy, 1.5 - litre 120 degree V6 engine. (See **PETER BAIL's** story in the EODC Newsletter no.119, Dec 2010).

So the rumours I had heard were true. With the approval of the Clisby family and with the valuable assistance of Kevin Drage, a development engineer who was heavily involved in the creation of the original Clisby V6, James and Kevin are in the process of arranging to have new casting moulds made (as the originals were unusable) in preparation for the fabrication of a second such unit of this once International F1 legal engine.

Then James posed the question, "Would I be correct in assuming Garrie's one-off Mono was the first all Australian designed and built F1 car?" After brief consideration I agreed it well could be. A subsequent quick scan of the relevant text in "The Elfin Book" confirmed that I had failed to mention that important fact.

Whether it would have been competitive with other F1 cars in 1965, the last year of the 1.5-litre International Formula One, is very doubtful given that the Formula had been running for five years as that was also the year the Elfin and its engine were built.

So the Clisby Elfin Mono chassis M6548 joins the Elfin MR9 as being unique, albeit I suspect the former will reappear on the circuits before the only purpose built ground effects F5000 car in the world.



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THE COOPER AUSTIN (Take two)...

While **GARRIE** was competing in sprints and hill climbs in 1957 and 1958 in his 750cc Austin A30 powered Cooper Austin (see picture at right), he was already planning a replacement. Tucked away in a corner of the Cooper Motor Bodies workshop was a space frame complete with suspension comprising transverse springs and wishbones but no uprights and hubs or steering. He had also fabricated a housing in the frame which would accommodate a sprocket for a chain drive from his 750cc Austin engine, transversely mounted behind the driving position, and a motorcycle gearbox. But the Elfin era and Streamliner idea intervened.



The Cooper Austin was sold to the late **LOU MOLINA** complete with the 750cc Austin engine and MG P-type gearbox. It appears that the next owners were Brian Putts followed by Peter Macrow who replaced the original engine with a unit from a 950cc Austin Healey Sprite, and went chasing Formula Juniors with some success apparently. Peter increased the engine capacity to 1237cc and eventually sold the now racier Cooper Austin to Don Stevens. Don, reportedly, with the assistance of a specialist in exhaust systems, carried out some modifications which didn't do the pretty little car any favours. At this point the trail takes an unexpected turn as the next owner, **JOHN HAZELEDEN**, was adamant he acquired the much altered Cooper Austin from **LOU MOLINA** and that the front suspension had been changed to a sliding pillar type. Also there was no log book. John set about restoring it to near original condition by initially discarding the archaic Morgan type front end, presumably put there by the previous owner, with the original Ulster swing axle set up. During the earlier drastic modifications, presumably the P-type gearbox was replaced as in its place was an Austin Healey Sprite unit containing special ratios. **JOHN HAZELEDEN** duly obtained a log book and has the car up for sale.

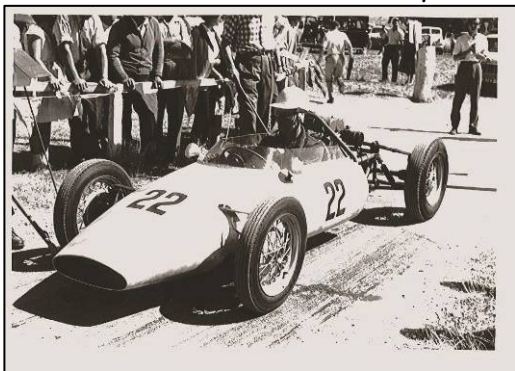
Meantime back at Cooper Motor Bodies Nick Davies, a resourceful and mechanically qualified chap, seeing the part constructed rear engine project appeared to have been abandoned, bought it and proceeded to complete the car using a BSA 650RR twin engine and gearbox and fabricated wire wheels with three inch Fiat 500 front rims and BSA front hubs at the front and five inch rims and rear BSA hubs for the driven wheels. After a few sprints and hill climbs and at least one outing on a circuit **RON GUPPY** became the new owner and commissioned **JOHN WEBB** to do the bodywork.



Ron also competed in sprints and hill climbs and entered in a local race meeting only to have the BSA fail due to overheating. Charlie Tuckey acquired the car and, with Garrie's okay set about "chopping" off the back of the frame including the rear

suspension and added framework to suit a BMC A series engine. Initially he raced against FJs, then for a second time Charlie took to the now much modified racing car converting it to a sports car he called the Nova. The Nova was powered by a mid-mounted Ford Cortina engine.

An interesting aside to emerge from the Tuckey ownership is that, while Charlie was working on his new purchase not knowing it's origin, Garrie never said a word to Charlie about him being the originator of what might have become the Cooper Austin Mk2.





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'BOURNE TO THE USA - words and music by BILL HEMMING.

ROAD AMERICA (July 16 - 19, 2015)

With an invitation from the US F5000 Association to join them in selected events in 2015, four intrepid Aussies (if you count Philip Lewis from Copenhagen as an Aussie....his real identity is a bit confusing) loaded a container with cars, tools, engines, ambition and bravado.

Like it or not, Australia's honour was to be in the dubious hands of:

Paul Zazryn - Lola T332

BILL HEMMING - Elfin MR8

Phil Lewis - Matich A50

John Bryant - Lola T140

What could possibly go wrong!

Bill and Phil intended to run at four meetings - Road America, Watkins Glen and two events at Laguna Seca. Paul had to skip Watkins Glen for marital reasons, and John was limiting himself to the two Laguna Secas.

Container arrived without drama near San Francisco. Paul and wonderful wife Gay were the only ones rich enough to go to the States early, so single handed they unloaded the container and transferred the lot onto a ripper, you beaut transporter for the trip to Road America, Elkart Lake north of Chicago for our first outing.

Paul (and Gay and daughter Tsharni), Bill (and no-one) and Phil (with Uncle Brian) arrived like gentlemen racers to find our cars sitting waiting in the F5000 marquee at the most incredible setting for a circuit we had ever seen. Road America is over six kms long, undulating though beautiful forests with very, very fast straights, uphill blind 90 degree corners, a never-ending sweeper and lots and lots of places to come to grief. The grounds and facilities are superb, and the officialdom was brilliantly helpful and friendly.

Interestingly, before we left Oz, we were flooded with paperwork and vehicle compliance forms with the impression that nothing non-historic would be condoned. Sure enough, after Paul posted the second quickest time, they rushed over to puff his engine to confirm capacity. Meanwhile, a couple of the neighbouring cars in our tent were running full suspension telemetry and in-car communication systems. Wasn't it Henry Ford who said "all history is bunk!"?

The rain held off for qualifying and Paul put in a brilliant second fastest out of the 20 starters. Phil got sixth best time and Bill managed eighth to put the three of us in the top ten.

Race 1 on the Saturday was our first experience of an American rolling start ie: only one car length between rows and start racing on the fall of the flag (which was in a position where only the front row could see it).

Unfortunately, Greg Thornton in his March on P1 suffered total power loss at the flag fall but managed to pull off the track. Two rows back, a beautifully restored Dodge engined Shadow frantically locked up. Behind him, an equally beautifully restored Surtees also locked up...to no avail. The Surtees hit the Shadow which speared across the track to collect the rear of Phil's Matich, sending Phil sideways across the other side of the track in front of most of the field. Phil's eyes were like dinner plates! The very badly damaged Shadow stopped in the wall in front of the accelerating Elfin. Bill used up his daily quota of underpants and swerved past to miss by two mm. It was Bill's best bit of driving all weekend.

The single file restart was uneventful (less four cars) and three racing laps saw Paul come second and Bill fifth. So two of us were happy.

The Matich looked like something from a typical Formula Ford race, with a bent front wheel, realigned steering rack, badly bent rear sub frame and suspension framework, and not-quite-right rear wing and exhaust. Phil used his charm and money to arrange for the car to go to Indianapolis for repairs to try and make Watkins Glen the following weekend.



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'BOURNE TO THE USA continues...

The feature race on Sunday saw the field reduced to only 11 cars. This time the start was uneventful because we left two car lengths between rows (following a driver's meeting where Paul put up a good case for the extra gap). By mid race, Paul was running a lonely second and Bill was third until the fourth placed Lola locked up and put him up in the air and off the track. The Elfin eventually restarted and came home seventh.

At the podium presentation of laurel wreaths and champagne, winner was Jay Esterer from Canada, ex-pat Aussie Bruce Leeson in a McLaren M10B was third and our Paul was second with a grin bigger than his pony tail. He declared he could die happy and the trip to the US was a success no matter what followed.

There were two other highlights on the weekend. One was the fantastic hunting lodge that Gay had found for us overlooking Turn 3 of the track. We spent many happy hours trying to suss our computer wifi connections while Paul went on and on and on about how wonderful life was, and Philip sobbed a lot. Bill simply drank Gin and Tonic with a confused and bemused look on his face.

The other highlight was spending time with Formula 1, Le Mans and F5000 ace Brian Redman who was the patron at the meeting, a fascinating and funny man. The only funnier man was Duck Waddle (his real, legal name!) who showed us around the track. Duck is an original member and part owner of the track consortium.

A minor lowlight was when Paul and Bill drove their cars on the highway to the town centre of Elkart Lake for a car show. Our 5000's were the only single seaters there and were absolutely the favourite of the kids who lined up to sit in the cars for a photo. Problem was, the Elfin battery gave out for the drive back (in the dark and in normal traffic) and suffered the ignomy of being push started in front of the very large, and largely drunk crowd. Unbelievably, two Australians appeared out of the masses to help push. And to express their embarrassment that an Australian car was the only non-starter.

That was Road America. Fan-bloody-tastic! If you can, just go there.

1a. Twixt Meets (July 27 - 23, 2015)

The week between meetings was a completely different experience for each participant.

Paul and Gay flew out to California to meet up with a Harley Davison gang. When she's not organising Paul's haphazard life and business, Gay organises annual Harley tours through the States. Day One of this year's tour meant that Paul had to give up Watkins Glen to support his wife (this concept was totally foreign to Bill and Phil). Greater love hath no man!

Phil and Brian dashed after the Matich to Indy, where Can-Am Cars worked miracles around the clock to repair the mangled rear subframe, suspension and bracketry....and the front steering. They then packed the Matich and their rental in the world's longest trailer for the ten hour drive to Watkins Glen, arriving about 4 am Friday morning for a two hour sleep before official practice. The standard of repairs was sensational. Car really was as good as new.

Bill had an easy drive via Detroit to take in the very impressive Henry Ford Museum and a private tour of the GM Heritage Centre which, strangely, is not open to the public and is hidden away in a non-descript industrial centre a long way from the GM factories and offices. He arrived at Watkins a day early to form up a new body panel and brute force some bracketry which suffered in his Road America biff.

Watkins Glen (July 23 - 26, 2015)

Our man John (Transporter Driver) arrived early and had the Elfin unloaded and ready for a practice run on the Thursday. Bill fitted his new panel which was painted in an orange almost, but not quite, the same orange as the rest of the car. Watkins Glen is a truly challenging circuit with few safe run-off areas in the corners that truly matter. We were limited to the short circuit while about 3/4 kilometre is being resurfaced, but there was more than enough of the old Grand Prix track to take a bit of learning.



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'BOURNE TO THE USA continues...

There were only three F5000's running (plus a 1982 ground effects Theodore F1 car fitted with a 5 litre Chev who claimed to be a F5000), so we were thrown in with the 1997 to 2006 Indy Light cars - all driven by desperate F1 wannabes. The leading pack was nearly ten secs a lap quicker than the F5000's. There were 22 starters in our group.

Official practice Friday morning saw Bill as quickest 5000, while yawning, re-eyed Phil got hauled up to the Stewards for getting in the way of the "Vettels" in their Indy Lights. A bit unfair because Phil was learning the new track, and checking his new repairs. Things didn't improve for Phil in Qualifying when he got black flagged and called in. Apparently, in Practice and Qualifying, you are meant to black flag yourself if you go off the track or spin. After two excursions, they called Phil in to remind him of this rule. Must admit, the rule was spelt out at the drivers briefing, but Phil was too tired, and Bill was too thick to understand.

In any case, Phil's times improved dramatically with each outing and by the last race on Sunday was less than a second off the best F5000 time. The boys were happy to eventually come in the top ten with the Elfin placed seventh and the Matich eighth.

This was achieved despite Phil losing a muffler when a broken bracket broke more, and Bill lost a complete exhaust header that broke off at the head flange. Fortunately it landed in a suspension bracket and made it around eight laps as a passenger, but in good enough condition to serve as a pattern for a newbie.

A great weekend, at a great track, with great history. Watkins Glen is full of restaurants and motels frequented and celebrated by the F1 and Can Am greats from 1952 on. And it has the best ice cream in America!

It is also the home of The International Motor Racing Research Centre where they can find and provide history of any vehicle. Both the Matich and the Elfin had raced at Watkins Glen in the 70's, so Bill and Phil came away with new info and photos of their cars.

Stay tuned. The saga continues in our next newsletter...



Two very different Elfins returning to the pits at the VHRRs Winton "Festival of Speed" in August. Youngster **JAMES PEPPER** (left) is quickly learning his race craft in the Penrite Oils Clubman, and new owner of the ex-**BILL HEMMING** Elfin 300, **WILL WALKER** (right) showed impressive form in his first outing. It was also good to see **SHANE HUGHES** at left giving the driver of his ex-Mr Juicy car, Jamie Larner, a few final instructions. Wonderful to see you back in action Shane!



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June 21 was the date, a nice pub in Brighton the location, and all was in readiness for a huge surprise for **BRIAN SAMPSON**. The well kept secret was to celebrate "Sambo's " 80th birthday, and a large gathering of friends, family and motor sport colleagues assembled ahead of time to welcome him into the room when he arrived with Brendan and Kerrie Jones. The guest of honour was gob-smacked but eventually recovered, and the occasion was a fitting tribute to someone who has made a lasting contribution to Australian motor sport over many decades. "Happy Birthday, Sambo!" - and well done, Brendan and Kerrie for a memorable celebration.



A SNAP SHOT OF BILL HEMMING's ANZAC WEEKEND by BARRY CATFORD

BILL HEMMING's ANZAC weekend at Mallala with his Elfin Formula Junior didn't exactly go to plan. On the Saturday the Elfin Heritage owner trundled into the pits unable to select any gear ratios other than the one in which he was stuck. Much jiggling of the shift lever failed to find neutral. Our intrepid Bill then concentrated on the shift mechanism connection to the rear-of-transmission located hockey stick. After further jiggling in the area of what must have been close to the source of the problem, Bill found a popular tool in his collection - (*a sizeable hammer!*) and attempted to persuade the hockey stick shaft to move forward using short, sharp impacts. When meekly challenged, Bill quipped that he wasn't hitting it hard.

Soon a veteran in a driving suit approached and, after discovering the situation, suggested removing the rear gearbox cover and examining the hockey stick. Roger, the veteran's name, was soon joined by another driver, Bill, as Roger asked

BILL HEMMING if he had "a spare" The reply was in the affirmative, and as mysteriously as the two drivers had appeared, they disappeared. This was to happen several times as the determined Elfin owner settled down to the task of removing the supposedly damaged component.

But once seeing the offending part in two pieces Bill located his spare, fitted it to the casting, renewed the Silastic gasket and tightened the cover holding nuts. The new hockey stick failed to rotate as far as was required much to the puzzlement of Bill. Enter Roger and Bill again telling the patient Hemming he would have to remove the cover again as the hockey stick needed to be in a certain position before replacing the cover for it to be functional. This done, the gears could now be selected from the rear end of the transmission. Now to connect the shift linkage. But no joy there as Bill now was only able to select two ratios, but not the other two, and not reverse. While juggling the adjustable linkage in the rotational mode our two rascals, for that's what they appeared to be, albeit knowledgeable ones, reappeared. Roger suggested a temporary solution to this new problem would be to loosen the linkage connector holding set screw (which had correctly been screwed into its locating indentation), rotate the hockey stick shaft until all gears could be selected and tighten the set screw attending to a fresh indentation later.

Bingo, Bill was back in business.

But not quite. While approaching the northern hairpin after the boomerang shaped Mallala straight during a later event, Bill found his steering wheel suddenly no longer connected to the steering column. No damage resulted. Bill admitted he had not replaced the removable steering wheel fully after getting into the Elfin. Thanks to Roger Ealand* (Koala) and Bill Norman (Lynx), the "knowledgeable veteran duo" for their valuable assistance and for the comedy relief they provided. Obviously Bill has been involved in many similar situations as he appeared to have taken it all in good humour.

*EODC members will be saddened to hear that currently Roger is seriously ill.

The **BENNETTS** (**LAURIE** and Nick) were also at Mallala in their Elfins.





ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc. MEMBERSHIP:

We welcome the following new members to our club:

No. 635 - RAY PEPPER (VIC)

Ray is taking an important paternal interest in son James' venture into Historic motor sport and is a great support for one of our youngest members. Well done, Ray!



No. 636 - JAMES PEPPER (VIC)

Son of the above, James is adopting a sensible approach to Historic racing and is doing all the right things behind the wheel of the Penrite Oils immaculate Elfin Clubman (in picture above).

We hope you have a long and happy association with the EODC.

WANTED TO BUY:

Restoring **JOHN BOWE's** ex 623 Elfin, parts required - body side shirts, engine cover, Stewart Warner Tacometer 0 - 10 mechanical or electric, and rims. Toyota Corolla Engine Parts - inlet manifold, cylinder head or any parts relating to this engine.

Will look at anything to do with 623's.

Email: **STEPHEN BYERS** (byers38@hotmail.com) or ring **NOEL CLARK** 0418590846.

GEORGE SPANOS has been grounded for some time but is now back at home convalescing after a stint in Cabrini Hospital. No doubt he will be looking forward to returning to his beloved VHRR clubrooms, especially for the Wednesday lunch gatherings. Before his health issue, George

submitted copies of two references to Elfins from Simon Heptinstal's book "1001 Cars to Dream of Driving Before You Die". Thanks, George, and these will appear in the December issue of the newsletter. Also, he is still looking for a new custodian for his famous one-off Elfin GTS after a previous sale failed to materialize. George can be contacted on (03) 9885 7130 and we wish him a speedy recovery.



VALE - KERRY LUCKINS

The EODC and motor sport in general lost a valued member when **KERRY LUCKINS** passed away on July 9. He had worked in the motor industry alongside the late Paul England where he acquired valuable engineering skills. This assisted him in the designing and building of an interesting sports car known as the Toran, a car that is currently undergoing a complete restoration by his brother Garnet and nephew Soren. Kerry was an exceptional motor racing commentator and officiated at many major circuits including Bathurst. His understanding of race craft, technical know-how and his friendly way of mixing with drivers, teams and officials made him a highly sought after announcer. He also served with distinction a term as President of the Light Car Club of Australia. Motor sport has lost a great ambassador. His wife Jennie sent a nice message to the club in response to the card we sent to the Luckins family.





ELFIN OWNERS and DRIVERS CLUB Inc.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Address.....

Postcode.....Fax No.....Mobile No

Phone No.....(home)(work)

Email.....

I am an owner/ex-owner/entrant/driver/mechanic/enthusiast of Elfin cars. (Please circle)

CAR.....YEAR OF MANUFACTURE.....

CATEGORY.....CAPACITY.....

ENGINE.....ENGINE NO.....

CHASSIS NO.....COLOUR.....

Any other significant mechanical details?

- HISTORY OF CAR -

EVENTS CONTESTED (include results and dates)

PREVIOUS OWNERS (and years)

◆◆◆ Please include a photograph of your car ◆◆◆

I wish to become a member of the Elfin Owners and Drivers Club, and

☐ have enclosed a cheque for \$25 - membership fee (no cash please).

☐ have paid my membership via direct credit -

Bank A/C No. 5003785 BSB 633-000 (Bendigo & Adelaide Bank)

Signed

Please return to Brian Reed
Box 447
AIREYS INLET 3231

or email brianreed.motorsport@yahoo.com.au

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